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Representation of Women in Iranian Painting (Case Study: Safavid and Qajar Paintings)

Sama Moazami*

Graduate of Master of Social Sciences, Kharazmi University, Tehran

sama.moazzami74@gmail.com

Shahla Bagheri Mayab

Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Kharazmi University, Tehran

7474ba@gmail.com

Robabeh Ghazali

Assistant Professor, Department of Costume Design, Al-Zahra University, Tehran

r.ghazali@alzahra.ac.ir

Abstract

Iranian painting has undergone many changes during different historical epochs. These developments are due to factors such as social, political, cultural, religious and the tastes of kings in relation to the Far East and the West. This descriptive-analytical research, which is based on Fiske's semiotic approach and according to the views and theories of Stuart Hall's representation, uses a qualitative content analysis and visual reading and textual-pictorial data. The purpose of this study was to investigate the female element in terms of meaning and content in Iranian paintings and also to identify the causes and factors of changes in the social and cultural status of women in order to identify their true place in historical epochs. It also examines these images in Qajar and Safavid epochs due to their connection with the West, which was a kind of traditional and modern duality appeared in the social, cultural and artistic relations of the society and it has an influential trend on the status of women. In this study, by recognizing the characteristics and developments of the female image in different epochs of painting, and by referring to some works, we examined the images. In the works of pre-Qajar painting epochs, women often had an exemplary and mythical status and has been depicted in terms of unnatural design and its visual value has been like other elements of painting. But at the end of Safavid epoch, due to the connection with the West, we are witnessing a change in the type of attitude towards painting, and as a result there is a change in naturalistic in depicting the body of women, as well as in the formation of monographs, which led to a different image of women than before in Iranian painting. During the Qajar epoch, due to the strong influences of Western art and naturalistic methods and painting techniques of the West, as well as using realistic painting of the West and the symbolic and miniature aspects of Iran, a different art was formed in Iran.

Introduction

Art in any epoch is the manifestation of thoughts, beliefs, ideas, customs and traditions, and in short, the culture of a nation that originates from the worldview of that nation. Therefore, by examining the works of art of a nation in any historical epoch, one can find valuable information about culture, its roots of growth or decline. This indicates the key point that art is related to its time (Zaboli Nejad, 2008: 157).

One of the cases that can be considered in the study of motifs is the woman as a member of

society who has always been of special interest in literature and art, representing and depicting each of the natural, human and imaginative elements in such works is based on the attitude and inference of society and artists towards these elements. In the Safavid epoch and with the arrival of Europeans in Iran and the influences that the West had on Iranian art, we are witnessing the depiction of more and more women. This trend continued until later epochs, especially the Qajar epoch, and gradually it is gaining more influence from Western art. By examining the paintings and murals of the Safavid and Qajar epochs, we will encounter the specific features of each epoch in representing the role of women.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the element of woman in terms of meaning and content in Iranian paintings and also to identify the causes and factors of changes and developments in the social and cultural status of women in order to identify their true place in historical epochs. The questions we are looking for are:

1. The female element in terms of meaning and content in Iranian paintings has been reflected and represented changes and perceptions of its contemporary society in different historical epochs?

2. What are the causes and factors of changes in the appearance, position and perception of society of women's personality in Iranian paintings in the Safavid and Qajar epochs and what effects has the relationship with the West and the modern world had on it?

From the published articles in this field, we can mention these cases: *The Struggle of Qajar Women: Individuality, the World of Tradition and Its Transition* "(Torabi Farsani, 2009)," *A Study of the Role of Women in Qajar Photography* "(Tayi, 2008)," *A Look at the Everyday Life of the Iranian People in the Late Qajar Epoch* "(Mahdavi and AhmadzadehNodijeh, 2013), "*Study of the social status of women and children in the epoch of Shah Tahmaseb Safavid based on the adaptation of drawings of Shahnameh Tahmasebi and Jami's Haft* Orang..."

(Shayestehfar, Khazaei, Abdolkarimi, 2014), "*Comparative study of women's clothing in Safavid travelogues and paintings* "(Vali Ghojagh, Mehrpooya, 2018)," *Study of women's social presence and the evolution of clothing in Safavid paintings* "(Taghavi, Mousavi, 2013)," *Comparison of women's image in India in Safavid and Qajar epoch – Case Study sample: Painting*"(Rezaei, Nazari Arshad, Tahmasebizadeh and Askar in Safavid Epochs with Emphasis on the Works of Reza Abbasi" (Mohebbi, Ghavam and Ranjbar, 2017), *"Hasbiyeh for Women"* (Variji and Momeni, 2016), "*Visual gender ideology in the works of male and female painters on the subject of women's portraits in the last six decades of Iran*" (Sojudi and Tabatabai Yazdi, 2015), and "*Representation of women in the works of contemporary Iranian women painters - emphasizing the sexual view on woman* (Shariati Mazinani and Sadeghi, 2011), *"The evolution of social and cultural conditions of women in the Safavid and Qajar epochs"* (Dehghani, Dadvar and Davoodi, 2015) "*Top examples in Iranian painting - coffee house painting*" (Musos Khameneh, 2009), that none of them has examined the element of woman in terms of meaning and content in Iranian paintings, and they don't identify the causes and factors of its changes that have been studied in this treatise.

Representation

The concept of "representation" is one of the key concepts in the study of all types of works of art. According to the representational approach, objects, people, events, and phenomena must be represented in order to become reality, and this is possible through their entry into language. In this regard, as Stuart Hall (1997) explains, language does not mean English, Chinese, and the like, but language in the sense of its community; That is, body language, written language, spoken language, image language, music language or number language. In this way we give meaning to things by the way we represent them, by the words we use for them, the stories

we tell about them, the images we create of them, the emotions we attribute to them, the classification methods we use for them; By doing so, we conceptualize them or assign values to them.

Today, the concept of representation has a prominent place in cultural studies. Representation connects meaning and language. Representation is usually defined as meaningfulness through the use of signs and concepts and the use of one thing instead of another with the aim of conveying meaning (Milner, 2006: 333). In other words, the representation is the intrinsic process of production and the exchange of meaning between the components of a culture which requires the use of language, symbols, and images to represent things. Representation, then, is one of the cultural practices in which these participants are in a culture that gives meaning to people, objects, and events.

The concept of representation owes much to the works of Stuart Hall; he mentions the three concepts, objects, and signs within the system of language and believes that a set of processes in these three categories are interrelated (Kafi, 2016). Hall calls this process "*representation*" and, based on such an idea, believes that meaning is made up of systems of representation. In Stuart Hall's view, representation is the use of language to produce meaningful points about the world; Meaning does not exist in essence, but is made, and it is the result and product of a signification procedure. Representation is the way in which we make reality meaningful. Also, the meanings that we create about ourselves and others and the world around us, we share or argue with each other through representation (Mahdizadeh, 2008: 16) Also, Hall tries to express different perceptions of representation in a general theoretical classification to show the relationship between representation, meaning, language and culture. From this perspective, representation theories fall into three general categories.
• Reflective theories
• Intentional theories

• Structural theories
Accordingly, Hall mentions the three concepts, objects, and signs within the system of language, and believes that a set of processes relate these three senses to each other. Hall calls this process "*representation*" and, based on such an idea, believes that meaning is the substructure of representational systems.

According to this view, representation is a central act that produces the culture and is a key step in the culture cycle. Hall argues that reality does not exist in a meaningful way and introduces representation as one of the key ways of producing meaning that is exchanged and distributed among members of a culture (Mehdizadeh, 2008: 22).

Thus, the concept of "representation" is how a social reality is manifested and emerged. To illustrate the relationship between representation, meaning, language, and culture, Hall tries to express different perceptions of representation in a general category.

1. Reflective theory: Representation reaches zero. There is what is depicted, meaning that reality is within the object, person, idea or event in the real world.

2. Intentional theory: There is no reflection and everything is a will, the painter shows whatever he wants and there is no reality.

3. The theory of constructivism: According to this theory, according to Hall, the media are not like a mirror that reflects what is in society (reflection theory) nor does it consider media productions to be completely directional and a product of the will; rather, he believes that this representation should be understood within social structures and attention should be paid to all the contexts and circumstances of the event that is represented.

Hall considers the third approach to be consistent with the general and social characteristics of language. According to this approach, things have no self-sufficient meaning, but we construct meanings and perform that action through systems of representation of concepts and signs. Constructivism does not deny the existence of

the material world, but believes that what carries meaning is not the material world, but the language system or system that we use to express concepts, which carries meaning, and social actors are those who use the conceptual system of their culture and the linguistic system and other systems of representation to construct meaning in order to create a meaningful world in relation to others.

Methodology

Stuart Hall, in his famous paper *Encoding and Decoding*, distinguishes between explicit and implicit meanings analytically. According to him, signs acquire their full ideological value at the level of implicit meanings and are able to correlate with discourses at the level of broader ideological meanings. In fact, the implicit meanings of the sign associatively represent ideological values (Hall, 2003: 344). Fiske also considers Hall's analytical distinction from explicit and implicit meanings and believes that it clearly and explicitly implies intention. In fact, the study of the implicit meanings of the signs in the stereotypes and strategies used in the image coding system leads us to understand that the text and the discovery of ideological orientations used in representation are semiotic, but John Fiske believes that to test research hypotheses and achieve generalized results, various empirical research methods such as content analysis and semantic differentiation analysis should be used.

Therefore, in the present study which is a descriptive-analytical research, methodological approach of Fiske semiotics and the views and theories of Stuart Hall representation is used and we examine the Safavid and Qajar epochs in a qualitative content analysis and visual reading and textual and pictorial data that is obtained by using the documentary method and referring to books and articles during the process of historical epochs and in a specific time range.

Codes

Codes transform signs into meaningful systems, and within these systems, signifier and signified are interconnected. The world is formed for each of the cultures within the framework of codes that allow them to exchange their experiences, and through this we can learn about existence and the social world (Zamiran, 2003: 135-140).

The code as an intermediary between the creator, the text and the audience, is a system of legal symbols based on cultural laws and customs that allow us to reproduce, preserve and evolve culture (Fiske, 2001: 127). Semiotics generally classify codes into different categories according to specific criteria. In the cultural studies approach, the codes are classified as follows:

1. Social codes: society is a system of social relations and the presence of human beings in this system, always and in advance is associated with covenants, muraqqa, identities, group symbols, customs, fashions, games,… and since the processes of social relations and its rules are rooted in history and the collective unconscious, social codes have strong implication (Giro, 2002: 126). so social codes can be divided into the following codes:

A) Verbal language (syntactic, lexical, metalanguage)

B) Limb codes (physical contact, appearance, facial expressions, body postures, head movements, gestures ...)

C) Commodity-based codes (fashion, clothing, technology)

D) Behavioral codes (ceremonies, games, feasts, role playing) (Zamiran, 2003: 136)

2. Text or representation codes: Representation codes, which Giro refers to as aesthetic codes, are less socialized and more likely to convey the creative power of the sender. They are images of reality that are vague and unstable. These codes are tools for understanding indescribable and irrational invisible things and human desires that can be divided into the following categories:

A) Technical codes (including video codes)

B) Art codes (in poetry, music, etc.)

C) Stylistic, erroneous and rhetorical codes such as narration

D) Logic codes, which themselves include three categories of scientific codes - symbolic and metalanguage. (Language alternatives of language narrators, educational systems, epistemology, symbols, mathematics, etc.) (Giro, 2003: 96-98).

3. Interpretive or ideological codes: Ideological codes organize other codes in such a way that a set of consistent and coherent meanings is created, and these meanings also form the normal consciousness of society. Ideological codes are directly related to the influence of power in setting and classifying other codes. The function of ideological codes is naturalization and myth-making of the contractual codes and dominating rules (Fiske, 2001: 129-130).

Ideological codes are the product of power-based coding and, in the context of domination, guide socio-cultural practices of the people. Ideological or interpretive codes are the following:

A) Perceptual codes (visual perception)

B) Ideological codes (patriarchy, racism, individualism ...) (Zamiran, 2003: 162).

Therefore, if any message, communication and rule has a code, coding is a characteristic of any human experience. Semiotics call the process of creating and interpreting text, encoding and decoding, respectively. Criticizing one-way communication theories that ignore the role of the human element, Stuart Hall emphasizes the politicization, reciprocity, and creativity of the producer and consumer of coding and decoding models. He sees the flow of communication as a flow within the institutions and discourses of power.

Critical semiotics of John Fiske

Fiske believes that cultural texts at the level of implicit meaning, are full of ideological codes and each of them seek a specific perspective on the world and try to make it look natural (Fiske, 2001: 136). John Fiske's critical semiotics is based on three stages. The first step is to provide a general description of the text; The second stage is the selection of the images that carry the most ideological burden and the third stage is the semiotic analysis of the selected images to explain the ideologies hidden in the text. In fact, the purpose of text analysis is to reach the final stage. According to Fiske, however, the analyst must always move between the various levels of analysis, which will be referred to in the following, in order to finally find and correctly explain the ideologies hidden in the text. According to Fiske, each image of the work must be analyzed at three levels, each with its own type of codes. The first level, which is the level of reality, has social codes; The second level, which is the level of representation, has technical codes and the third level, which is the level of ideology, has ideological codes (Rawdrad, 2012: 110).

Based on Fiske's view, reality is pre-encoded; Or, to be more precise, it is only through the codes of our culture that we can comprehend reality. There may be objective and empirical reality. But there is no universal or objective way to perceive and understand it. In any culture, what is considered reality is the product of the codes of that culture.

Therefore, reality is always pre-encoded and there is no pure reality, and in the display of this encoded reality, the technical codes and customs of TV representation affect it so that the program is firstly technically broadcastable and secondly has a suitable cultural text for viewers (Fiske, 2001: 129).

In Fiske method, social codes refer to the real elements of social life such as clothes, appearance, movements, colors, etc., which have different implication, so that because of the codes that in a society throughout history are loaded, giving a symbolic character to the social world. In other words, reality is always encoded and there is no "pure reality". Therefore, when these social codes are due to technical codes, such as narration, time and place ... that make it possible to create a visual-audio text. It is through these codes that the audio-visual text is actualized and expresses their ideological codes; Ideological codes such

as individualism, patriarchy, racism, materialism, capitalism, etc., which seek to make the historical phenomenon natural and eternal. According to Fiske, *ideology* is more effective than what Marx credited to it, because it works more from inside, not from outside - ideology is deeply embedded in the ways of thinking and life of all classes (Fiske, 2007: 253). It is this ideology that seems "natural" and "normal" in the work of distributing power in society (ibid .: 150).

Sampling

The statistical population of the research according to its subject is all works of art, paintings and drawings that include the Safavid and Qajar epochs in terms of time span. In research sampling, we use purposeful sampling techniques in qualitative methods, in other words, the concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research and it means that the researcher selects people and places to study that can be effective in understanding the research problem and the central phenomenon of the study, which are the selection of specific units based on specific objectives related to answering specific research questions. We selected the sampling according to Fiske's critical semiotics from images that had social, technical, and ideological codes. The social codes discussed from the image of women are examined according to the social status and classes of society, the type of women's activities in society by looking at the painting atmosphere. Also, the technical codes of the painting, which include the composition of the elements of drawing patterns and the clothing and jewelry decorations, are shown separately in each of the images, and then we will examine the codes of ideology such as physical characteristics and beauty of statues and behavior of figures, type of body covering and the extent of showing off and changing attitudes and beliefs towards hijab in this category.

The mythical image of a woman in the history of Iran (six thousand years BC to the Islamic period) and its impact on works of art

One of the events in defining the position of women in the first Iranian society was her definition as a myth. "Myth should be considered as an attitude that combines the expression of human thought with imagination and has imposed itself on human life throughout history, and we must accept that myth is a set of cultures such as customs, traditions, works and behaviors that has a spiritual, artistic, historical, literary and religious presentation. Myth has settled in the collective human subconscious and has manifested itself in works of art from literature to visual arts "(Moin, 2002).

In ancient Iran, the first independent sculpture was made of small specimens of mud of pregnant women and animals, which was a reflection of the achievements of the two fundamental beliefs of worship of fertility and nature; they were symbols of the mother goddess or lord of fertility from semi-natural sculptures with very large breasts, abdomen, and hips, have reached the stages of elegance and complete abstraction (picture 1).

The existence of these works in the whole society, on the one hand, is a sign of the social and special place of women in these primitive societies, and on the other hand, it indicates the superiority of human beings from the cosmic and mythical position of the female force in the universe. Also, the natural similarities between the life-giving force of woman and the earth caused these two forces to be considered as one, and woman became a symbol of the great mother, meaning the mother of the whole universe, whose extract and source of life flow in her breasts. This mythical power can be seen in all primitive societies at the beginning of the agricultural era, and especially in the statues of the mother goddess and motifs derived from this thought in the works left from that epoch (Zabolinejad, 2009). In the Temple of the Gods or Ziggurat of Choghaznabil, near Susa, the mother goddess was worshiped in the third

millennium BC. At the end of the same millennium, in the temple of Inshushing, there was a statue of a great goddess called "Ninursang" or the Lady of the Mountain.

Iranians in the first millennium BC worshiped the goddess Anahita and considered her the goddess of water, the mother goddess and the goddess of fertility. Many sculptures and motifs of this lady have been left which tells of her worship in temples (picture 2).

Picture 1: Goddess of Fertility (known as Venus Sarab), 6th millennium BC, Museum of Ancient Iran, Source: Author

Picture 2 : A statue of Anahita, the goddess of water, the goddess of motherhood and fertility, source: https://parsiandej.ir/

Ideal women (Islam enters Iran)
One of the basic features of images of women before Islam and especially in the Islamic epoch is their ideal face. In ancient times, the ideal face of women could be seen in the goddess Anahita. In the Islamic epoch, Iranian painting is very much influenced by factors such as religion, mysticism, the tastes of the patrons, who before the Safavid epoch, the most important of them were sultans and courts, as well as traditional and cultural restrictions.

The women in these paintings are either hidden mistress that without knowing the content of the text of the book and the story in which the painting is depicted, are not reflected from the self-portrait to the viewer alone, or are servants of the royal feast due to political precaution with a kind of veil are shown in a contractual and consensual manner. The women illustrated in the paintings are not much different from the

people in terms of appearance, the faces and bodies are in a cryptic and silent state. While the characters and behavioral and physical characteristics and mental states of women in the text of the poem or story of the book are alive and have real human life and characteristics, as seen in (Figure 3), the image of women in the Islamic epoch goes towards the visual contract .
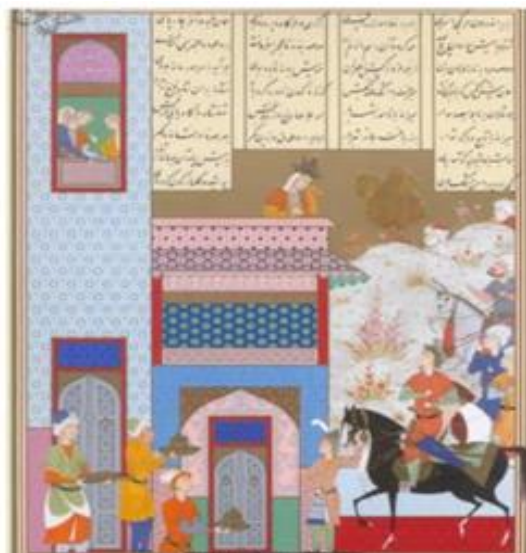
Picture 3 : Khosrow is going hunting and seeing Shirin and sending him to his seraglio(harem), Nezami Ganjavi, Source: http://wikipedia.org/wiki/persian-miniature

The image of a woman in Safavid epoch paintings (9th century AH)

The Safavid era has been one of the most brilliant eras in the art of painting, in which we see the emergence of great artists who have played a significant role in the development of Iranian painting. The changes that we are witnessing in this era can be seen in the works of Iranian painters, namely *Kamaluddin Behzad* and *Reza Abbasi*.

According to Behzad, a female body is not only a decorative form but also a sign of human status and other creatures and elements have been created to evolve her. In his works, it is the female form that gives life to other elements of the image and "how women's faces go beyond purely decorative and role-playing aspects and acquires value per se and full of realistic themes "(Rahimova, 2002: 120). In (picture 4),

look at the body of a woman lying by the pool, and a woman applauding or the women in the pool. These are no longer the women sitting behind curtain of the previous works, but they have entered the real world and we even see that the women are drawn naked in the pool. Although, women in Behzad's works are depicted in everyday life situations, and these paintings still have a spiritual color and smell, and the image of women as a result of the continuation of the previous style is the same as the Mongolian image with almond eyes and arched eyebrows, although women are naked, but this nudity is free of any stimulant effect and the limbs are drawn in such a way that they are not different from the male limbs and there is no sign of shamelessness in these small figure(Azhand, 2008:405).

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Picture 4: looking of Bahram Gour at women's swimming, Khamseh Nezami 900 AH, attributed to Behzad, British Library, London (Azhand, 2008: 405)

In Reza Abbasi's works, women have a different state. The place of presenting the image of a woman in Reza Abbasi's works is either in the collection of muraqqas or in the context of book arranging stories and poems such as Khamseh Nezami and the like. Reza Abbasi portrays women in a different and bold way, with an independent and reckless personality. His works are full of iconoclasts. "Women are independent in the muraqqa; They are not portrayed in the context of stories and are not influenced by the traditions of painting, nor are they related to the glorious moral and cultural values. The image of these women is the image of reckless, bold and independent women who impose themselves not as judges but as models to the viewer and the audience and influence their tastes with their presence and create new tastes as used feminist terms to explain the personality of these women. In other words, the terms "second sex" and "other" can be used for dignified women or dancers and servants, and "the first sex", "independent" and "person" can be chosen for women in Reza Abbasi's works "(Rahnavard, 2004 .)

In Reza Abbasi's works, there are young women who are present in palaces or alleys and bazaars. In terms of external decorations around it without a cape and to some extent transparent and their headband is so briefly and sometimes with hair without cover, and the way of sitting is special and different from the image of women in other paintings and they are rarely naked or with vulgarity. They are often engaged in decorative work, such as looking in the mirror (picture 5); Either they are engaged in fringe and fribble movements, or lyrical and poetic, such as donating flowers or a glass of wine; or they are counting aimlessly with their fingers, or with a bag of money in their hands, or they are arranging their coquettish clothes and Chadors, and in each state, they are very dependent to their gender, as if they are the only heroes of the scene and not spectators of scenes and events (Vali Yari Eskandari, 2010: 76).

Picture 5 women holding a mirror, Reza Abbasi, (Javani, 2006: 45)

As we can see, the painter puts the woman in the center of the image and pays attention only to the main theme and completely avoids using sub-visual themes. The empty space in this work allows the viewer to find more connection with the main subject and not to be confused, while "in the tradition of Iranian painting before the Isfahan school, there was no empty space in the image and the audience see different and lively themes in each work, several subjects were placed next to the main subject and the visual value of all of them seemed to be the same ”(Shad, 2006: 24_28). But the image also has no subject and only a woman is depicted who has no longer that spiritual states of the previous images. The vertical frame is also drawn according to the female form.

Humanism

One of the most basic elements of Iranian painting, both structurally and in terms of content, is the human form. This form in the history of Iranian painting, after the independence of this art from copy design and its transformation into an independent art with new aesthetic rules, as a pivotal element overshadowed other elements of painting and even found an independent and unique presence in monographs.

After the Safavid dynasty, a coherent style and a formant school emerged in Iranian painting. Due to the thematic and practical features of the paintings, the title "court iconography" was considered appropriate for this school. This style remained more or less until the beginning of Nasereddin Shah's reign.

The human form in the painting of the Qajar epoch completely lost its main place, which relied on the teachings of Iranian mysticism in previous epochs, and was reduced to a mere visual-decorative element in the service of the apparent representation of the model. As a result, that ideal example of human form became a special human being and this world. It also has many disproportions in the display of limbs. The artist sought to satisfy the sense of individuality and discernment of the client, especially the king himself, by depicting such a human figure with awe and a gorgeous image, and to show the personal characteristics of those who ordered their statue.

Monograph

Apparently, from the time when design and painting were separated from the issue of book decoration and came into being in the form of muraqqas and single leaves, paintings became popular that no longer serve to express and depict a specific story, poem or literary them, but rather the aesthetic aspect of its bodies is important. Portraiture, single-face painting of women, youth, and lovers became more common than stage-making. In the school of Isfahan, woman is no longer a mythical creature and they enter the realm of daily life like a living creature. Although an aura of idealism still surrounds her, she is less suspended between existence and non-existence, and human truth in this school enters the paintings in different form of the previous schools, which was due to the fundamental change in the culture and thought and the way of artists' and their supporters' view.(Vali Yari Eskandari, 2010: 79) In this type of paintings, often a body or a young couple in addition to a few plants and a twisting cloud are represented to simple lands and placed in muraqqas. (Shad Qazvini, 2015: 19) Drawing animals such as dogs, rabbits and parrots symbolize the entry of Western culture in the works (picture 6).

Picture 6: women looking at a dog, 1640 AD, London,Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/persian-miniature

The image of a woman in Qajar epoch paintings

Much of Qajar painting is to depict women; As Qajar painting in a general sense has a kind of feminine effect that the reasons can be listed as follows: the existence of a harem in large dimensions, polygamy of Qajar kings' wife, women's involvement in government and state craft. (Tafazoli, 1999: 118) Such images in terms of subject, characteristics and method of performance are presented in parallel with social events, artistic approaches and influenced by the tastes of the clients. During the Qajar epoch, due to the confrontation with the West, the desire to experience the modern world and the desire of the Western world to know the Eastern world, a kind of traditional and modern duality appeared in many social, cultural and artistic relations of society. This trend also affected the status of women and their presence in the social arena. The visual arts of the Qajar epoch, which had a feminine appearance due to the multiplicity of images of women, were not excluded from the effects of confrontation with the West in line with social and artistic developments and based on the aesthetic criteria of their time. Following the acquaintance with Western art, the change of court tastes, the gradual distancing of art from the court space and the spread of folk art, the image of a woman changed from an ideal, imaginary and limited image of the court to an

objective, realistic image in relation to everyday life(Hatam and Hatampour Ghiasi, 2009).

Painting curtains with the theme of women musicians in the epoch of Fath Ali Shah, have always been a popular subject for decorating royal palaces. These images were installed in the halls of out-of-town homes, which were intended for private and formal parties and celebrations. The clients of such subjects were mostly merchants and people affiliated with the Qajar court. Women musicians are mostly depicted in oil on canvas, along with local daf, tambourine traditional instruments such as the tar, tonbak, and fiddle. In these curtains, women have appeared in luxurious and special costumes that are decorated with all kinds of jewelry and embroidered pearls. (Jafari, 2003: 38). (picture 7) as one of the selected works of the epoch of Fath Ali Shah in the Qajar epoch on the subject of women musicians is reminiscent of the characteristics of the Qajar school. By examining the work from different angles, we can understand the ideal concept of women of this epoch and the new way of representing them in images. The faces of Qajar women have taken on an ideal state under the influence of literary works. These faces are very different from the proportions of real world faces. They worship virtuosos, literati and beauticians because they saw in the beauty of their faces the effect and sign of the beauty of God's creation. This way of looking outside through painting and the audience expresses a kind of intercultural influence that has penetrated into Iranian art along with the Western humanistic worldview. A direct look at the audience creates a kind of dialogue and two-way communication and in other words, a discourse between the work of art and the audience, puts the audience in more contrast with the work (Yousefian and Javani, 2011). It can be said that the first sign which attracts attention in the face or in the whole painting, the woman's eyes that are fixed on the audience.
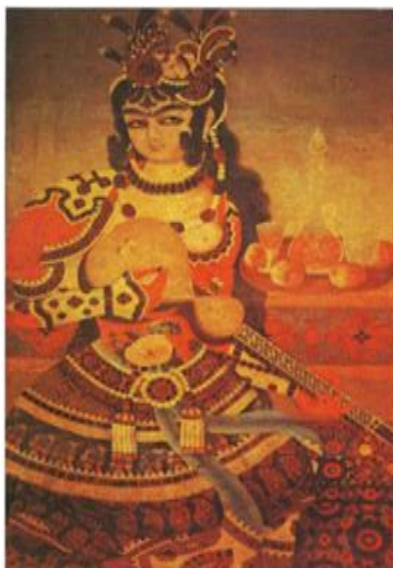
Picture 7 : young woman playing tar, by Abolghasem 1231 AH-1816 AD (a collection of paintings of Iran in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AH 1351)

Other works that are considered in the monographs of women of this epoch are their decorative nature. In the studied image, the volume of decorations is so large that it has turned into a completely decorative work. The role of the idol on the dress and crown of another woman was one of the most widely used Qajar painting

designs. The application of this pattern can be seen on women's clothing, background and crown. In addition to Qajar kings, Qajar women also had a great desire to use ornaments and jewelry. They were also used for beauty and to draw attention towards their social class.

The wine painted in the picture is also symbolic. "The journey to the land of Persian poetry, literature and art is an intoxicating journey. Wine cups and refreshments and crystal clear glass jugs are inseparable elements of Iranian culture. Qajar women are often accompanied by fetishistic objects such as; Fruits like apples and pomegranates. Female organs in Persian masculine poetry and prose are often compared to various fruits, such as peaches for the lips and apples and pomegranates for the breasts. Perhaps the most common of them are still used in Persian poetry and everyday speech is apple as a symbol of femininity in the images of Qajar women (Diba, 1999;209).

The Baghdad fortune teller (picture 8) by Kamal al-Mulk is one of his most famous works performed during his trip to Baghdad. Ordinary subjects and their free expression in life are the prominent features of his work in this epoch. "The presence of women and their liberation from the hard shackles and rules of the past is also interesting in this work." A girl and her mother came to a Jew in Baghdad to find out their fortune. The fortune teller and his friend are sitting on a kilim in their room and sharing a box. The fortuneteller's hand is inside the horoscope book and is busy explaining the girl's fortune with a smile. The girl, who is also a little decorated, raises her hair with a taffeta chador and puts her two hands on her knees and smiles when she hears her good omen. On one side of the fortune teller's room is a hookah and a wooden chair, and on the other side is a fortune teller's bed that he is leaning on "(Bagherzadeh, 1997: 19).

Figure 8: Baghdadi fortune teller (Jewish), by Mohammad Ghaffari (Kamal al-Mulk), 1322 AH, oil paint, Museum of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, (Khansari, 1989: 292)

This painting testifies to a social and realistic view and is in fact the culmination of Kamal al-Mulk's work and brings him closer to realism. In this work, the life flows. The lighting in this work is embedded and real and is close to the characters and helps to show the prosperous characteristics of the life of mother and

daughter and the humor and vivacity of the fortune teller and his colleague. The books on the right of the painting and the book in the hand of fortuneteller, the fabrics, especially the wrinkles of the old man's cloak and clothes, seem to be beautiful and convey the realistic meaning of these objects. The old man's hands and face are carefully and powerfully implemented in the light shadow design. The characters are well known and have a logical relationship with each other. Light and black surfaces in the image create eye movement. The eyes and hands are in a position and selected to convey meanings. In this work, the painter is immersed in the nature of nature and the depth of substance and matter, and draws out its inner poetry and passion, and with the language of line and color, in the play of light shadows and the reflection of light, the nature and personality of people has revealed in completely natural faces and stature, a feature not found in the previously studied works.

The portrait of Taj al-Saltaneh (picture 9) is another work of the Qajar epoch that has been selected here due to the importance of female individuality and her realistic expression. This oval painting of the Qajar princess is an example of the image of an enlightened woman in the Iranian court who was a wise and active woman in socio-political affairs. She sits in front of a plant, holding a tightly wrapped package , her hand is on a table in front of a bunch of freshly arranged flowers. She is wearing a Victorian dress with blue velvet embroidered with black velvet.

picture 9: Portrait of the Taj Al-Saltaneh, 1910 AD, Unknown Artist, Oil Painting, (Diba, 1999:272)

Her straightforward, serious, and somewhat harsh demeanor and direct look give her a sense of confidence. The comparison of this portrait shows the changes that have taken place under the influence of the Constitutional Revolution. This picture shows how almost all the traditions were changed during the Qajar epoch and how different the women painted in this epoch are from the ideal women of the previous epochs.

In this picture, first of all, the identity of the person is quite clear and indicates her special personality. Secondly, its spatialization is represented according to renaissance attitude in a raw manner, which

is also based on the geometric of perspective. Also, the use of its decorations, especially on clothes, is limited to circles that sometimes become large and sometimes small, and there is no sign of special and unique decorations of Iranian painting. The shape of the figure and the direction of her look also evoke a momentary and instantaneous feeling in front of a camera that tries to capture a certain moment. (Ebrahimi Naghani, 2007) The whole appearance and show up of people from the front during this epoch was influenced by the technique of photography and journalistic photographs of printed images and imported products of the West. Exhaustive and exaggerated details to show the mental and personal states are also the effects of such a tendency. The high mastery, perfect quality of the painting and the presence of the background in the portrait of the woman as a special person also show that the painter took the image from the photo (Diba, 1999:272).

However, Taj Al-Saltaneh is displayed without hijab. But one can see the beads of the rosary around her wrist, which is a symbol of religious piety. Such a duality reflects the ambivalence of women and Iran's ambiguous relationship with the West at a time that show their hesitant to follow the rules of conduct and religious ethics and the motivation to embrace modern Western methods. The high level of mastery, the perfect quality of the painting and the presence of the background in the portrait of the woman as a single person make it possible for the painter to have taken the image from the photo. In comparison with the images of Qajar women in the early epoch and after the Constitutional Revolution, we see that following the increase of women's social role, the way of showing them has also changed (Diba, 1999:272)

The influence of symbols of Western culture in the images of Iranian women

One of the factors that influenced the faces of women in the paintings of the Safavid epoch was the prevalence of Westernization. Westernization in Iran was common more than two hundred years from late seventeenth century and 11th AH until the early twentieth century/14th AD (Pakbaz, 1999: 71 & 359). The arrival of European and European art to Iran, their presence, especially in the trade of European paintings and printed images, aroused the opinion of some Iranian painters to include European motifs in Iranian paintings (Azhand, 2006: 199) Here, by comparing some Iranian paintings that have changed during this epoch under the influence of Western painting methods, we will discuss how to combine traditional Iranian painting methods with European painting methods.

The image of a lady next to a fountain (picture 10), which is now preserved in the Edwin Bini collection, was painted by Aligoli Jabbardar around 1805 AH. The shape of the scenes and the color of this scene are influenced by the paintings of the seventeenth century / eleventh AD Iran on Aligoli Jabbardar. With Carefully looking at this picture and also part of the picture of the birth of Christ (picture 11) by Francesco Di Giorgio Martini, we find many similarities: Clothing form, posture and movement of the body, especially the position of the legs, dealing with the folds and showing the body volume, the painter's attention to anatomy, shading, face painting, space creation, scene arrangement and coherent composition, attention to perspective and minimalization to the elements of the foreground, all of which show the extent of European influence on the work of the cultural artist. The Iranian painter has shown his adherence to traditional painting partially only by placing water containers next to the pond and the shape of the rocks. Because in

drawing the volume of dishes in the desired angle, it has not been done in a scientific-perspective way, but the body has a soft shape and movements like European painting. According to the history of the creation of the two works, it is clear to what extent the Iranian painters of the time of Shah Abbas have considered the works of Europe in the past and have been fascinated by its dimensional representation.

Picture 10: a lady next to the water fountain, Isfahan, 107 AH, Aligholi Jabbardar, Arthur Skeller Gallery, Smith sonian Institution, Washington (Azhand, 2006: 254)

picture 11: Birth of Christ, Francesco Di Giorgio Martini, 1486, Dominico
http://arthistoryesources.net

The monograph (picture 12) is also a product of the Isfahan school. This lady's garment is made of Isfahan silk fabrics in the 11th century AH, full of Islamic flowers

and plants inspired by the arrangements and decorations of this epoch. Her scarf is noticeable, tied with a green ribbon and a bunch of her hair hanging from the scarf. The lady has decorated with a vase full of red flowers with a suitable array. On the right, a half-watermelon with a knife dipped in it can be seen on the table, and next to the watermelon, there is a wine bottle with Saghar. In the outer scene, a groove of creek water and the greenery along it are carved with a lush tree and the blue sky is full of white and gray clouds. There is a red velvet on the table. The jacket on the body of the figure, like the fabric of her pants, contains repetitive patterns of flowers and leaves. The nails of the body are painted red lacquer and have a necklace on her neck which in the middle of it, a Yemeni agate is embedded. It is clear that the statue was standing on a balcony and the light shone from the left and placed the statue and the table in a light shade (Azhand, 2006: 252). In Comparison of the painting "A Foreign Lady in Persian Clothes" (picture 12) with the European work of Queen Charlotte (picture 13), we encounter similar characteristics in terms of how to combine the elements of the painting, shading and accuracy in drawing patterns and decorations on clothes, showing body volume, landscaping and creating space: placing the body in a three-faced position next to the window and table, paying attention to the index square in dividing the frame and also showing curtains and its folds, paying attention to the exponential depth in drawing distant landscapes that are probably imitated from the *Venice* school , the paving lines of the floor and the lighting, the look on the face of the woman towards the audience are all similar to the European work. The Safavid painter is still holding his arched eyebrows, bud lips and small and delicate nose. In addition, the decorative characteristics of the work and the way of paying for the clothes, legs, face and hands of the figure show the Iranian painter's loyalty to the Iranian painting traditions (Shad Qazvini, 2006: 24-28)

Picture 12 : A Foreign lady in Iranian clothes, Isfahan school 1060-1090 AH, oil on canvas, Tehran Saadatabad Palace (Azhand, 2006: 264)

picture 13: Monograph of Queen Charlotte, Nathaniel Dance, between the 13th and 18th centuries. Source: http://arthistoryresources.net

As it has been said, in these works, little by little, there are signs of women in real realities that the evolution of this method can be seen in the Safavid epoch. The main feature of this epoch is the painter's artistic independence, painter's tendency towards realism and diminishing the influence of religious views and Chinese style and the heritage of ancient painting. The coming to power of the Safavid government, Iran's relations with European countries, economic prosperity, expansion of foreign trade and reaching the European Renaissance waves through this way to Iran, the support of Safavid kings, who also had a strong religious position, of painting and their desire to foreign painting and the change in the foundations of the philosophy of art and its forms, frames and techniques, transformed Iranian painting from decorative drawings of textbooks into independent and somewhat realistic art, made a woman's face with recognizable physical characteristics of a Iranian woman along with a display of her moods and behaviors that indicated the difference between her personality with men

reflected in Iranian painting (Vali Yari Eskandari, 2010: 162).

Factors influencing the process of these changes can be considered as follows: the beginning of the relationship with European culture, artists' travel to Europe and acquaintance with the works of Renaissance painters, the arrival of paintings and buttocks by some Western artists by merchants and changing artistic tastes of society, The withdrawal of art from the possession of court and the emergence of new patrons and customers from among the non-courtly wealthy and the emergence of influential artists have led to the influence of realism on images, albeit slowly. (Shad Qazvini, 2006: 24-28).

Conclusion

Iranian painting has undergone many changes during different historical epochs. These developments are due to factors such as social, political, cultural, religious and the tastes of kings in relation to the Far East and the West. By studying Iranian paintings in order to find meanings and a relative

understanding of women as a visual element in terms of its meaning and content, the sociological and cultural characteristics of each epoch of history were identified. The Safavid and Qajar epochs are one of the most important socio-political as well as cultural-artistic epochs of Iran. The painting of this epoch has undergone changes due to its connection with the West, the modern world and the influence of European art, which has led to the presentation of a different image of woman in appearance and her place in the works of art of this epoch. This descriptive-analytical study, which with the approach of Fiske semiotics and according to the views and theories of Stuart Hall's representation, uses a qualitative content analysis and visual reading and textual- visual data, the female element in terms of meaning and content in Iranian paintings reflection of social, political, religious, cultural status and real position of women in the areas of society in historical epochs.

As a suggestion for researchers, it can be said that images of Qajar women can be a rich source for understanding the changes in thinking about gender and identity in this epoch, the intellectual transformation of society around social and cultural beliefs and new cultural adaptations, which in research in this field will help to know more about these images.

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